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Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects
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Working paper submitted by Argentina

Recommendations on issues under cluster IV, International cooperation and assistance

Objective 1: To establish a permanent assistance and cooperation mechanism based on donations from donor countries and non-governmental organizations for areas identified as being poorly implemented (implementation of sec.. III, paras. 3-6)

1. Bearing in mind the comments made by a majority of countries in the framework of the biennial meetings and in several national reports, international and regional assistance may still be considered to be deficient and to not be adequately accessible.

2. Consequently, it is thought necessary to adopt a permanent assistance and cooperation mechanism established on the basis of donations from countries, international organizations and non-governmental organizations through a pool of pre-established questions. The questions would take into account the reports of the two biennial meetings which assessed the areas contained in the Programme of Action that require strengthening.

3. We are aware that there are countries with a special interest in strengthening specific areas of the Programme of Action. Therefore, an opportunity to find a common space for facilitation and meeting would be offered to donor countries in a position to do so and to the countries that need assistance.

4. The financial implications of the establishment of these mechanisms for the United Nations would not seem to be important inasmuch as they would become a vehicle for facilitation. The available human resources in the Conventional Arms Branch of the Department for Disarmament Affairs could be sufficient to carry

forward the enterprise. The existence of the Coordinating Action on Small Arms should not be forgotten either.

5. At first, assistance and cooperation will be considered necessary in the following spheres:

(a) The establishment of measures for effective control of production and transfers (sect. II, paras. 2 and 11-13), including the question of intermediation (ibid., para. 14), and assistance for the development of criminal legislation (ibid., paras. 3 and 14);

(b) The establishment of units of national coordination (ibid., para. 4) guaranteeing the holistic view proposed by the Programme of Action (Preamble, paras. 2, 4, 5, 15 and 17) and the development of national plans of action;

(c) The establishment of appropriate intelligence controls (sect. II, para. 6) and facilitation for international coordination;

(d) The establishment of the measures agreed in the framework of the instrument on tracing and marking, as established in section II, paragraphs 7, 9 and 10;

(e) The destruction of arsenals and security measures for stockpiles (ibid., paras. 16-19);

(f) The establishment of campaigns on awareness-raising, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants (ibid., paras. 20-22);

(g) The preparation of national reports and mechanisms of information exchange at the regional level (ibid., para. 23);

(h) A unit for coordination with the assistance mechanisms existing at the regional level.

6. The questions over which the permanent assistance mechanism is competent could be progressively broadened as they become included in or addressed by the Programme of Action.

Objective 2: Improvement of the mechanism for transparency and exchange of information between Member States

7. We consider it essential to improve the transparency and information exchange mechanism within the Programme of Action. So far, the only tools we have are the national reports submitted voluntarily by States to the Department for Disarmament Affairs. However, these national reports are not prepared according to similar criteria, despite the existence of a practical guide prepared by the United Nations Development Programme. It would also be advisable to have a document prepared by the Department for Disarmament Affairs analysing the content of the reports. That document should contain tables in which the measures adopted by Member States on each of the questions addressed by the Programme of Action are easily identifiable. This would act as a sort of incipient follow-up mechanism.

8. The Department for Disarmament Affairs should also have a database in which to publish the documents presented by Member States for the control of transfers, brokering activities and requirements for the marking and registration of weapons,

among other things, as established by the instrument on tracing and marking (A/60/88, annex, para. 31 (b)).

Objective 3: Identification of additional measures to strengthen and/or clarify the commitments already assumed in the Programme of Action (e.g., the adoption of new documents on best practices for inclusion in the Programme of Action at the upcoming biennial meetings or the second Review Conference)

9. Although the ideal situation would be the adoption of annexes to be incorporated into the Programme of Action during the first Review Conference, realistically speaking, at least a commitment could be made to launch a process for the preparation of documents that could be incorporated into the upcoming biennial meetings of the States to consider the implementation of the Programme of Action.

10. These new documents would not necessarily expressly require adherence by all Member States since they could be used as action guides, as in the case of the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials with Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission model regulations.

11. The following issue was identified: the launching of a permanent process of coordination with the Security Council and the sanctions committees with the aim of achieving better implementation of questions related to arms embargoes (sect. II, paras. 15 and 32) and with the Counter-Terrorism Committee on themes relating to the fight against terrorism in general (Preamble, paras. 5 and 7, and sect. III, para. 15).

Objective 4: Agree on the identification of topics absent in the Programme of Action and make a decision on the launch of a process towards their inclusion in the framework of future meetings (e.g., the second Review Conference)

12. The following issues were identified:

(a) The establishment of a follow-up and assessment mechanism on national reports;

(b) The establishment of programmes of assistance to victims (which could be included in the future assistance mechanism described above).